

For the Children

TOMMY.

If you meet a little barefooted lad,
Whistling a tune that is merry and glad,
With an old straw hat pushed back on his head,
With his lips all stained with the strawberries red
That grow on the five-acre lot, with eyes
That are blue as the bluest of April skies,
With a mite of a nose that is upward turned,
And cheeks by the sun's fierce kissed burned—

That's Tommy.

If you want to know where the May flowers hide
'Neath the dry, dead leaves in the glad springtide,
Where the violets dance 'neath the pine trees brown,
Or Jack Frost shakes the first chestnuts down;
Where the trout best bite or the wild grapes grow
In purple clusters hanging low;
Where the coast is longest, the ice most clear,
When the happy holiday time draws near—

Ask Tommy.

With hands thrust deep in his pockets small,
He trudges away when the cow bells call;
Father's "right-hand man" he is called at home,
Though he'll not be eight till the snowflakes come;
And mother smiles over the work that would be
Both hard and wearisome were not he
Ready and willing on errands to run
From the peep of dawn to the set of the sun—

Dear Tommy.

When the bluebirds are crooning a low good night,
And the haycocks have put on their nightcaps white,
When the purple shadows enfold the hills,
And down in the meadow the whip-poor-wills
Lift up their voices, a tired boy
Creeps into arms that know no joy
Like holding him, and fond lips press
The tangled curls as they say: "God bless

Our Tommy."

—Selected.

BILLY'S BREAKFAST.

Jane Ellis Joy.

There was an unusual stir in the big house of the Horns. The excitement seemed to center in the kitchen, where the maids, with anxious faces, were gathered.

Mr. Symonds, the gardener, who was raking the dead leaves off the lawn, heard the excited voices, and came into ask what was wrong.

"It's Billy," said Mrs. Henry, the cook. "He won't eat his breakfast."

"No, Bill won't eat his breakfast, Mr. Symonds," wailed Mary, the chambermaid.

"Billy won't eat his breakfast," echoed little Hester Henry.

Mr. Symonds seemed to think this was very serious. He looked long and hard at Billy. Then he took off his hat and scratched his head, after which he remarked solemnly, "Billy must be sick."

"Filly, Billy, do eat your breakfast," coaxed Mary

again. "You really ought to be ashamed of yourself, Billy, unless you are sick, as Mr. Symonds says. I have fixed for you a beautiful breakfast with my own hands—nice bread and milk—and the milk not skimmed either. And to think you won't touch it."

"Oh, Billy, please, please, do eat!" urged little Hester Henry.

Billy's little stubby tail wagged very faintly in answer to Hester, and his round brown eyes looked up into Hester's blue ones as if he really would like to remind her of something, but yet was half ashamed to mention it. Mrs. Horn, who usually fed Billy herself, was still in bed. She was not ill, but she had been at a party the night before, and it had been almost morning when she got home.

Billy seemed to realize that his mistress was not to be expected to appear, and looked shyly at the basin of nice bread and milk that Mary had set before him; but something was certainly wrong, and finally he slowly turned away, licking his lips.

"Perhaps he wants a little meat," said Mrs. Henry. The servant's breakfast-table had not yet been cleared, and Mrs. Henry went to the platter and took up the carying-knife and cut up some nice little pieces of steak that had been left, and presented the tid-bits to Billy on a war mchina plate. As a general thing Billy was very fond of cooked steak, but this morning the daintily prepared meat did not seem to tempt his appetite any more than the creamy bread and milk.

"What do you thing of it, Mr. Symonds?" asked Mrs. Henry. "What do you think?"

"Looks bad, very bad indeed," said the gardener, slowly.

"I wonder if Mrs. Horn would want us to send for a doctor?" suggested Mrs. Henry. "I don't like to waken her, but perhaps I ought to. I wish I knew what to do about it."

"Do you hear that, William? The doctor is to be sent for!" said Mary, trying to see what a threat would do. "Then, if you don't eat your breakfast you will have to take horrid pills, Master William! Listen, now, and consider what I have said!"

A good while ago, when Mrs. Horn had hired Mrs. Henry to do her cooking, it had been agreed between them that little Hester Henry should stay with her mother. Hester was not troublesome in the house, and everybody liked her. There were no children for her to play with. She played with Billy. Mrs. Horn sometimes let her help to feed Billy, and she would hold Billy while Mrs. Horn tied the ribbon bow that Billy wore on his silver collar. Hester was really a valuable and privileged and petted member of the kitchen household.

Knowing considerable about Billy, therefore, and his ways, little Hester Henry now had an idea of her own. For a while she was half afraid to speak out before so many grown people. Her mother had cautioned her not to talk a great deal, and never, never to be bold or saucy. But, having heard Mary speak about going for a doctor, and fearing that Billy might be obliged to swallow "horrid pills" Hester finally took courage, and piped out:

"I know why Billy won't eat his breakfast."

"Why, Hester Henry, what is it? Good gracious!"